

Cindy Adams has used water-saving devices including this rain barrel outside her Lake Villa home to conserve water. ANDREW A. NELLES/PHOTO FOR THE TRIBUNE

# Forest preserve runs toilets on rainwater

By Jeff Long TRIBUNE REPORTER

Toilets at Ryerson Woods in Deerfield soon will be flushed with rainwater.

It's not some quaint throwback to a simpler time, but a look ahead as the region's population swells, and a precious resource water — becomes increasingly scarce.

The welcome center at Ryerson, a Lake County Forest Preserve, opened in 2006. Officials needed special permission from the state to use rainwater and melting snow collected from the roof to flush the toilets, said Nan Buckardt, director of environmental education at the preserves.

They didn't get it until late last year, but already had put the plumbing in place. Ryerson will be hooking up the toilets to the

rainwater in the next few months.

Buckardt hopes it will become a model for other water conservation efforts. Proposed state legislation would make it easier for others to follow suit, because plumbing regulations in Illinois do not now allow such

The Ryerson water supply, collected in a 60,000-gallon tank in the welcome center's basement, also can be used to fight a fire.

Everything we did in this building is something people could do in their own home," said Jill Stites, an environmental education specialist with the forest pre-

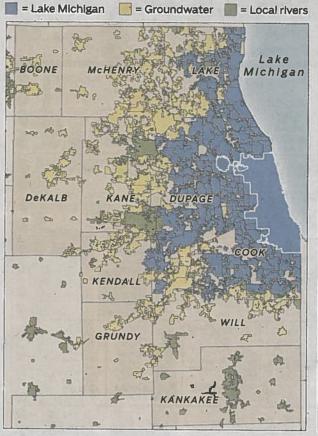
The effort comes as a new report calls for aggressive conservation to ensure that the

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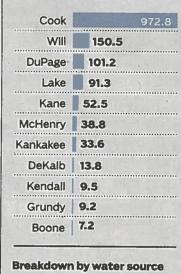
### Region's demand for water projected to rise

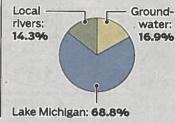
Source of public water supply in 11-county area

By 2050, the Chicago area's demand for public water could increase by 35 percent, according to reports by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Here is a look at water use in the region.



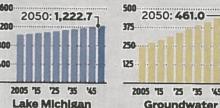
Water withdrawals by county 2005 data, in millions of gallons per day, excluding water for "once-through" power plants

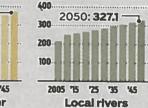


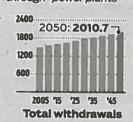


### Annual public water demand scenarios for 11-county area

Potential demand, in millions of gallons per day, excluding water for "once-through" power plants







SOURCES: Benedkyt Dziegielewski and F.J. Chowdhury, Southern Illinois Unversity Carbondale Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, ESRI

TRIBUNE

# Haiti group forged by disaster, fortified by generosity



Max Gustave Joseph and Anne Bernadel Fouche of the Haltian Congress to Fritify Haiti organize relief supplies. LANE CHRISTIANSEN/TRIBUNE PHOTO

Formed after 2005 hurricane, Evanston-based Haitian Congress again rushes help to homeland

By Brian Cox

SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

At the Haitian Congress to Fortify Haiti in Evanston, volunteers are trying to keep their hopes as high as the piles of canned goods, blankets and hand-washing lotion being collected for friends, relatives and countrymen who survived Jan. 12's devastating earthquake.

"It's very painful not to be able to go there and help," said Aline Lauture, the organization's executive director. "Our focus is on doing everything we can to send relief in our place."

The nonprofit organization of Haitian immigrants and those of Haitian descent was formed in the aftermath of the 2005 hurricane in Haiti to help develop schools, businesses and culture there. The death and destruction wrought by that event were widespread, but nothing compared with the earthquake, whose estimated death toll could top 250,000 and which has given the Evanston group's mission even

Lauture's tired speaks of the long, hectic, heartwrenching days and nights she and others have spent trying to organize relief efforts to help the tens of thousands of people injured and the estimated 1 million people left homeless.

At her computer in the Haitian Congress' Dodge Avenue storefront, Lauture points to a recent photo of a smiling young couple.

"He is dead and she is dead," she said, pointing to the image of her friends. She also said her cousin was killed.

Another couple who had moved

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Jill Stites opens the Ryerson Woods Nature Preserve cistern that holds rainwater for fire suppression and, with state permission, tollet flushing. CHRIS WALKER/TRIBUNE PHOTO

## Water savings fall from sky

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11-county northwest Illinois region's increasing water demand can be met in coming decades.

Some in the north suburbs — from a day care operator in Lake Villa, to a volunteer with the "green ministry" at a Libertyville church — already have taken that philosophy to heart.

Cindy Adams operates a day care center out of her home in Lake Villa, where residents are on a water supply pumped from the ground. Although her village is applying to get Lake Michigan water, she knows that's no sure bet and wants to do her part to conserve.

Last spring, she began collecting water in rain barrels around her home. She also uses a

special shower head and has her toilet tank adjusted to use less water when she flushes.

In previous summers, she saw water bills of \$325 to \$400. Last summer, it was about \$175. But cost isn't her only motivation.

"I'm trying to do my little part to conserve," she said. "And think green."

Tom Simpson of Libertyville recently got his church, St. Lawrence Episcopal, into the act by helping set up two rain barrels to collect water to irrigate plants around the grounds.

"We thought it was an important demonstration for the congregation," Simpson said.

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### Plan to conserve our liquid assets

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the shower or sink.

It also calls for collaboration among communities to protect shared sources, such as river basins and underground aquifers.

It notes that the average water and sewage bill in Illinois is about \$35.50 per month, while the national average is \$39.67. The report encourages water utilities to evaluate whether the price they charge really reflects the value of water.

"Water pricing is increasingly becoming a tool for managing demand, with certain pricing options carrying more of an incentive for consumers to use water efficiently," the report says.

Studies have shown that in Illinois, increasing the cost of water by 10 percent decreases demand by 1.5 percent, according to the report.

It warns that strict regulations safeguard water from Lake Michigan — which already supplies 77 percent of the region's demand. Although several communities in western Lake County are asking to tap into the lake, the report notes that Illinois is nearing the limit that a Supreme Court decree set in 1967 for lake withdrawals.

So conservation is increasingly important for communities that rely on groundwater, or the Fox and Kankakee rivers, according to the report.

"We've got to become more efficient," said Tim Loftus, program manager at the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, which coordinated the study.

The report looks at water use in Boone, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties.

About 9 to 10 percent of the region's water comes from deep bedrock aquifers, according to the report. Another 9 to 10 percent of residents use shallow aquifers, and 4 to 5 percent get their water from the Fox and Kankakee rivers.

The report estimates that Cook County's population will grow about 19 percent by 2050, and the demand for water by about 14 percent.

Loftus noted that outlying counties, with the most room to grow, are predicted to see demand increase the most. Kendall County, for example, is expected to see a demand grow by more than 160 percent by 2050, according to the report; Grundy County by about 97 percent; and Will County by nearly 82 percent.

Josh Ellis, a program associate at the Metropolitan Planning Council in Chicago, applauded the new report and its call for conservation. He echoed that outlying counties must be cautious about water

He said suggestions in the report about using "gray" water for uses such as irrigation or washing cars will go a long way.

"The problem is not always conservation," he said. "Sometimes it's the water you're using. There's no reason to wash your car with treated drinking water."

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